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The situation in Afghanistan

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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/11 and Security Council resolution 2096 (2013), in which the Council requested me to report on developments in Afghanistan every three months.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan, including significant humanitarian, development and human rights efforts, since the issuance of my previous report, of 6 December 2013 (A/68/645-S/2013/721). It also provides a summary of key political and security developments and regional and international events related to Afghanistan. The annex contains an assessment of progress made towards benchmarks and indicators since the issuance of my report of 5 March 2013 (A/67/778-S/2013/133), in line with Security Council resolution 1868 (2009).

II. Relevant developments

3. On 17 January, four members of the United Nations family in Afghanistan were killed in an attack on a restaurant in Kabul. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the assault, which took the lives of our colleagues Vadim Nazarov (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)), Wabel Abdallah (International Monetary Fund) and Nasreen Khan and Basra Hassan (United Nations Children's Fund), together with 17 other Afghan and international civilians. The years of conflict in Afghanistan have brought tragedy to many. Here, I pay special tribute to the dedication of these international civil servants. Given the planned transfer of responsibility for support for UNAMA from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs, my Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, paid a familiarization visit

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to Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif between 13 and 15 February. He delivered a message of sympathy following the 17 January attack and expressed appreciation for the staff of UNAMA.

A. Political developments

4. Preparations for the upcoming elections remain on track for the scheduled polling date of 5 April. The formal campaign period for the presidential elections began on 2 February and that for provincial councils on 4 March. Vigorous political activity can be observed throughout the country.

5. On 5 January, President Hamid Karzai convened a meeting of all 11 presidential candidates at which he stressed the need for transparent elections and emphasized his commitment to non-interference by the Government in the process. Since the start of the campaign period, candidates' banners and billboards have lined the roadways and large-scale rallies have been taking place in Kabul and throughout the country. A unique feature compared with previous elections in Afghanistan has been the number of televised debates, nine as at 25 February, providing candidates with opportunities to explain their views on diverse topics.

6. Election-related violence included an assassination attempt on vice-presidential candidate Ismail Khan, formerly Minister of Water and Energy and Governor of Herat, on 24 January. This was followed by the fatal shooting of two members of the campaign team of presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah in Herat on 1 February, with a third killed in Sari Pul on 7 February. The convoy of Mr. Abdullah came under gunfire when returning to Kabul from Nangarhar on 19 February; he was unhurt. Despite those incidents, a strategic threat to the elections has not emerged. In a significant political development that occurred in early January, the leader of the armed opposition wing of Hezb-e Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, instructed supporters to participate in the elections. On 16 February, a spokesperson for the group stated that the party supported the presidential candidacy of former senior party official Qutbuddin Helal, who is standing as an independent candidate.

7. Technical preparations for the elections remain further advanced than those for previous polls held in Afghanistan. By 31 January, the Ministry of the Interior completed a security risk assessment of 7,168 polling centres initially proposed by the Independent Election Commission. The Ministry concluded that Afghan security forces could secure 94 per cent of polling centres, although 796 of them were considered to be high-risk. On 19 February, the Commission, having considered this security advice and drawn on its own assessments, announced a list of 6,775 polling centres, with 21,663 polling stations (12,705 for men and 8,958 for women). The movement of electoral materials to the provinces began on 12 February. Furthermore, by 14 February the Commission's top-up registration exercise had distributed an additional 3.5 million voter cards to those who had reached 18 years of age, lost their voter cards or moved since the holding of previous polls. Approximately 35 per cent of those receiving new cards were women. In order to support a maximum franchise, this exercise will continue at the provincial level until two weeks prior to polling day.

8. On 6 January, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission referred allegations of serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or corruption against five presidential candidates to the Attorney-General's Office for further

investigation. On 15 January, the latter announced that the files had been closed owing to a lack of evidence. Scrutiny by the Commission of the eligibility of the 2,713 provincial council candidates continued. On 26 January, the Commission announced 25 disqualifications based on educational and/or age criteria, with an additional 19 on 16 February. This new institution continued to establish its infrastructure and organizational capacity. An interim strategic and operational plan was presented to donors on 16 January, and procedures for the registration, filing and adjudication of electoral challenges and complaints were published on 4 February. On 11 February, President Karzai approved the appointment of 102 provincial complaints commissioners. Of concern is the low number of women appointed (only six of the total) despite the efforts made to increase female representation.

9. On 22 January, the Media Commission, a temporary body established for the electoral period, issued amended regulations governing the conduct of media entities during the elections, and on 29 January it launched a series of 10 regional workshops to explain its mandate and regulations to media practitioners. Electoral observation will be undertaken mainly by Afghan groups, complemented by international missions at the request of Afghan authorities. As at 2 February, the Independent Election Commission had accredited 1,027 domestic observers (from 53 domestic observation entities) and 106 international observers (from 3 international observation entities), as well as 135 political party agents (from 24 parties). A total of 519 media representatives (375 domestic and 144 international) have also been accredited. Between 13 and 24 January, a European Union exploratory team visited Afghanistan, and on 23 January the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe published its exploratory team report, which foresees the deployment of a 15-member election support team.

10. Progress towards the establishment of a formal peace process with the armed opposition remained limited. On 22 December, a statement attributable to the Taliban denied reports that the former deputy leader Mullah Abdullah Ghani Baradar, who remains in Pakistan following his release from prison, was authorized to engage in formal dialogue on its behalf. On 12 February, a former Taliban-era official, Agha Jan Mutasim, announced that several leaders of the movement had met in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and agreed to launch an "intra-Afghan dialogue" to include the Government of Afghanistan, the Taliban and other insurgent groups. On 15 February, Afghanistan's High Peace Council, followed a day later by the Afghan National Security Council, welcomed Mutasim's announcement. On 19 February, a Taliban statement denied participation in the Dubai meeting or engagement in any type of peace talks with Afghan authorities and stated that Mutasim was not currently an official of the movement and did not represent it.

11. As at 31 December, the joint secretariat of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme reported that a total of 7,796 individuals had joined the Programme and that 164 small grants projects in 25 provinces had been approved, providing short-term employment opportunities. In continuing efforts to support an environment conducive to peace, a High Peace Council delegation visited Saudi Arabia between 28 December and 2 January to attend an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting of religious scholars. There was a positive response from OIC to the Council's proposal to form a working group of international ulema to counter religious narratives that fuel militant violence in Afghanistan. On 21 January, the Council's women's committee launched a nationwide campaign, entitled "Afghan Women's Call for Ceasefire and Peace", to collect 300,000

signatures demanding the cessation of armed hostilities. UNAMA meanwhile continued to facilitate local dialogue to mitigate inter-ethnic and intertribal tensions and to build confidence among communities. Gatherings were held in Jawzjan, Kunduz, Logar, Maidan Wardak, Paktya and Takhar Provinces, with the participation of local government officials, traditional community leaders and civil society. In January, UNAMA also launched a series of seminars to promote the role of Afghan ulema in supporting the peaceful conduct of elections, drawing together clerics and religious scholars from Badghis, Ghor, Herat, Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar and Nuristan Provinces.

12. Afghanistan's bilateral security agreement with the United States of America remained unsigned. President Karzai continued to assert the conditions he had enumerated at the conclusion of the consultative loya jirga in November, including the official launch of a peace process. On 21 December, negotiations were initiated between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Afghanistan on a status-of-forces agreement to provide a legal framework for a post-2014 training and advisory mission. NATO has stated that this can be concluded only after the signature of a bilateral accord with the United States.

13. On 13 February, the Government of Afghanistan released 65 prisoners previously transferred to its authority by the United States. The Embassy of the United States in Kabul condemned the release of what it termed "dangerous detainees" linked to serious crimes, as contrary to commitments under a 2012 memorandum of understanding. On 17 February, Abdul Raqib Takhari, a former Taliban minister of repatriation who had been listed pursuant to the 1988 Security Council sanctions regime, was killed in Peshawar. The Government of Afghanistan described him as a "martyr of peace" and transported his body to his home province of Takhar for burial.

B. Security developments

14. The security situation in Afghanistan remained volatile. The United Nations recorded 20,093 security incidents in Afghanistan in 2013, making the year second only to 2011 in terms of the level of violence seen since the fall of the Taliban regime. Of those incidents, 70 per cent were reported in the east, the south-east and, in particular, the south. Kandahar Province was the site of 13 per cent of all incidents occurring in 2013. Tactically, armed clashes and improvised explosive devices represented 75 per cent of total incidents in 2013, with armed clashes up 51 per cent compared with 2012. Afghan forces have proved to be capable of defending territory from attacks by anti-government elements and regaining ground, although with significant casualties. One example is a 23 February insurgent attack in Kunar Province, in which at least 19 Afghan National Army soldiers were killed, with 6 remaining missing. The increment in armed clashes is understood to be a consequence of greater operational tempo on the part of Afghan security forces and focused attacks by anti-government elements on Afghan forces during the transition. Throughout 2013, provinces in the east and south faced intensified attacks from an array of groups, including Tehrik-e-Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, in addition to the Afghan Taliban. In northern Afghanistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan continued to operate in remote and mountainous districts and to present a serious challenge to peace, security and stability. The tactical use of suicide bombing by the armed opposition continued, with 107 such incidents

occurring in Afghanistan in 2013, of which 18 were in Kabul, compared with 101 in 2012, of which 7 were in Kabul.

15. As of mid-January, the personnel of the Afghan National Army numbered 193,427, which included 7,300 military personnel serving in the Afghan Air Force. Remaining shortfalls were largely at the strategic and budget management levels, along with specialized capabilities including aviation, the countering of improvised explosive devices, and intelligence. The attrition rate, at some 34 percent during 2013, continues to be a major concern. On 8 January, the Ministry of the Interior opened its first specialized training school on the defusing of improvised explosive devices, with the aim of instructing approximately 1,500 police personnel annually. On 14 January, Colonel Jamila Baez was appointed police chief of a district in Kabul, the first female to have been appointed to such a post. With only about 1 per cent of police personnel being women, on 21 January the Ministry launched a strategy for better integration of female personnel into the Afghan National Police, with protection measures to prevent abuse. The Ministry is also to train 13,000 female searchers to work in polling centres on election day. As of the end of 2013, the United Nations-administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan channelled the salaries of 145,199 police.

16. Separately, the Afghan Local Police security initiative continued to expand, with 27,000 personnel in 142 districts by mid-February, with plans to expand to 30,000 by the end of 2014. Nine per cent of all security incidents in 2013 were directed against its personnel. Often stationed in volatile areas and sometimes deployed in roles for which they are ill equipped and insufficiently trained, they can represent an easy target. There are reports from many communities of improved security owing to the presence of the Afghan Local Police. At the same time, UNAMA continued to document human rights violations committed by some members of the Local Police, including summary execution and punishment, intimidation, illegal searches and extortion. Between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014, UNAMA recorded 14 civilians killed and 18 injured by the Afghan Local Police, a fourfold increase compared with the same period in 2012/13.

17. As regards security-related developments that have a negative impact on both the Afghan population and the ability of the United Nations to carry out mandated tasks and activities, the reporting period saw unprecedented numbers of security incidents. This was at least partly the consequence of abnormally mild weather conditions, which meant that the operations of all parties were less hampered than normal. From 16 November 2013 to 15 February 2014, 4,649 security incidents were recorded, representing a 24 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2012/13. Thirty-five suicide attacks were recorded between 16 November 2013 and 15 February 2014, compared with 17 during the same period in 2012/13. Ten of these took place in the capital, compared with five during the same period in the previous year. The 17 January coordinated attack on a Kabul restaurant, which claimed the lives of four members of the United Nations family, was the deadliest attack on foreign civilians since 2001: 13 international and 8 Afghan civilians were killed. The Taliban took responsibility for the attack. Another 21 security incidents, directly or indirectly affecting the United Nations, were recorded between 16 November 2013 and 15 February 2014. Most were criminal acts or acts of intimidation directed at national staff. Two United Nations convoys were fired upon in Nangarhar, injuring three police escorts, and a UNAMA helicopter sustained slight damage under small arms fire en route to Gardez.

18. Throughout 2013, the number of incidents involving mines and explosive remnants of war increased, with 455 casualties, including 129 deaths, recorded, compared with 367 casualties and 91 deaths in 2012. During the reporting period, mine action partners supported by the United Nations cleared 28 battlefields and 214 minefields in 31 communities, with an additional three districts declared mine-free. An estimated 4,171 minefields remained across 33 provinces. In addition to addressing the legacy of previous conflict, the United Nations is developing a strategy with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to dispose of the explosive remnants of war from military bases, firing and demolition ranges, sites where air munitions have been used and recent battlefield sites. Key to this strategy will be a definition of the scope of the issue. To date, ISAF has provided the United Nations with coordinates for 231 airdrop and battlefield sites and 331 firing ranges.

C. Regional cooperation

19. Afghanistan continues to actively engage its neighbours and to promote regional cooperation. This includes its lead role in the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, the pursuit of strengthened political dialogue, and progress on confidence-building measures. On 17 January, India hosted a senior officials' meeting in New Delhi. "Heart of Asia" member States and supporting countries and organizations focused on issues of security, including the movement of extremist elements and the importance of regional energy cooperation for economic development and stability, as well as on reviewing progress on the six agreed confidence-building measures and funding modalities for the Process. Between 2 and 11 February, as part of the disaster management confidence-building measure, Japan hosted officials from Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Turkey to share information and best practices. Between 26 and 27 February, Afghanistan hosted a terrorism financing seminar as part of the counter-terrorism confidence-building measure. Preparations are also under way for the sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, to be hosted in Kabul on 26 March.

20. There are also ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral ties between Afghanistan and other countries in the region. On 8 December, President Karzai visited Tehran and agreed with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, that their countries would work towards a comprehensive friendship and cooperation pact covering long-term political, security, economic and cultural cooperation and regional peace and security. On 26 February, on the sidelines of a meeting of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Tehran, the Chair of the Wolesi Jirga met with the speaker of the Majlis of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On 12 December, President Karzai visited India, where, together with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he emphasized Afghanistan's commitment to regional cooperation, integration and development, including through the Istanbul Process. The two leaders also pledged support, together with the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the development of new trade and transit routes. This was followed by a visit of the Minister of External Affairs of India to Kandahar on 15 February to inaugurate the Afghanistan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University with President Karzai. On 7 February, on the sidelines on the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russian Federation, President Karzai met the President of China, Xi Jinping, who affirmed China's willingness to continue to assist Afghanistan's

reconstruction and encourage investment. He also reiterated support for smooth presidential elections and an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned national reconciliation process. On 22 February, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China visited Kabul and met with President Karzai and other senior officials. On 13 February, President Karzai travelled to Ankara for the eighth Trilateral Summit with the President of Turkey and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. A joint statement welcomed the "positive momentum" in bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, including strengthened trade and economic relations. The need for continued regional and international development cooperation in support of the stabilization of Afghanistan was underscored. On 22 February, the Minister of Finance of Pakistan led a high-level delegation to Kabul for the ninth session of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission and also visited a number of projects in Afghanistan completed with Pakistani assistance.

21. My Special Representative, Ján Kubiš, continued his mandated regional cooperation outreach activities. On 13 December, he visited Ashgabat, where he met with the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, and discussed the importance of humanitarian access and infrastructure projects to Afghanistan. On 22 January, he attended a meeting of Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in Moscow, and discussed shared threats, including drug trafficking and terrorist groups, as well as the need to increase cross-border trade and investment. Between 23 and 25 February, he visited Islamabad for consultations with the Government of Pakistan.

III. Human rights

22. On 8 February 2014, UNAMA released its Annual Report 2013 on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The report documented 2,959 civilian deaths and 5,656 civilian injuries (8,615 civilian casualties) in 2013, a 14 per cent overall increase compared with 2012, with a 7 per cent increase in the number of civilian deaths. The report attributed 74 per cent of all civilian casualties in 2013 to anti-government elements (2,311 civilian deaths and 4,063 injuries) and 11 per cent to pro-government forces (8 per cent to Afghan forces and 3 per cent to international military forces, with 341 deaths and 615 injuries). Ten per cent of the total was attributed to ground engagements between anti-government elements and pro-government forces with civilians killed in the crossfire, and the remaining 5 per cent resulted mainly from explosive remnants of war. Both of these sources of civilian casualties represented growing trends in 2013.

23. Between 1 November and 31 January, UNAMA documented 572 civilian deaths and 1,066 civilian injuries, reflecting an increase of 15 per cent in civilian casualties compared with the same period in 2012/13. Anti-government elements were responsible for 76 per cent of civilian casualties and pro-government forces for 9 per cent during this period. The remaining 15 per cent of civilian casualties could not be attributed to any party, stemming primarily from ground engagements, cross-border shelling or explosive remnants of war.

24. The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on Children and Armed Conflict continued to receive reports of incidents involving grave violations of child rights. Between 1 November and 31 January, 104 children were killed and 254 injured as a result of conflict. The detonation of improvised explosive devices was

the leading cause of child casualties, resulting in 48 deaths and 67 injuries. Ground engagements, which include crossfire, shooting, artillery, rocket, mortar and hand grenade attacks, killed 37 children and injured 133. Unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and landmines claimed the lives of 13 children and injured 41.

25. On 8 December, UNAMA released a report entitled "A way to go: an update on implementation of the law on elimination of violence against women in Afghanistan". The report, which was based on consultations with 200 officials and the monitoring of nearly 500 cases of violence against women in 18 provinces between October 2012 and September 2013, contained mixed results. The registration of reported incidents had increased by 28 per cent compared with the previous 12-month period, yet the use of the 2009 law as a basis for indictment and conviction had increased by only 2 per cent. Overall, the number of criminal indictments filed by prosecutors in cases of violence against women had decreased. On 1 March, the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs launched the Government's own report on the status of the implementation of the law in line with its commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Based on research conducted in 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, it echoed many of the Mission's findings. The availability of baseline data is a critical element in the development and implementation of a government action plan to address identified gaps. Concerns were expressed over article 26 of the criminal procedure code, as approved by the National Assembly, which barred the questioning of family members of the accused as witnesses, thus preventing the effective prosecution of many cases of violence against women. On 23 February, President Karzai endorsed the code and then amended the language in article 26 that barred the testimony of relatives, through legislative decree.

26. On 28 January, the findings of the five-yearly accreditation review of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission were published, with a decision on its status deferred for one year. The International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions, while expressing great respect for the Commission's work and effectiveness, noted with concern the Government's process of appointing new commissioners, the staff gender ratios and the dependence on donor funding. The Committee stressed the need for the Commission to address those concerns with the Government of Afghanistan by November 2014, failing which it would be recommended for a downgrading to "B" status.

27. UNAMA continued to visit Afghan-run detention facilities to observe the treatment of conflict-related detainees. During the reporting period, 54 places of detention run by the National Directorate of Security, the Afghan National Police, the Central Prisons Directorate and the Afghan National Army in 20 provinces were visited. Afghanistan's general prison population grew from 12,000 in 2008 to 29,000 in January 2014, with a growing number of hunger strikes over conditions of detention as well as inconsistent application of prisoner releases. Female prisoners in Mazar-e Sharif staged a three-day strike in January, claiming that male prisoners accused of serious crimes had been released while their cases, many involving "moral crimes" unsupported by the law, were not being addressed. During the same month, 22 prisoners in Ghor Province protested their sentences. UNAMA and specialized agencies are working to improve training and prison infrastructure, with an initial focus on Takhar, Jawzjan, Kunduz and Kabul Provinces.

IV. Implementation of the Kabul process and coordination of development assistance

28. On 15 January, Afghanistan's national budget for the fiscal year 1393 (21 December 2013 to 20 December 2014) was approved by the lower house of the National Assembly, or Wolesi Jirga. Of a total of $7.6 billion, 65 per cent is allocated to operating costs and 35 per cent to development. The security sector alone absorbs $3.4 billion. On 11 February, the Ministry of Finance announced the allocation of $1 million to five provinces under its pilot provincial budgeting programme. The outcome of the pilot will be used to evaluate prospects for the implementation of a more general, decentralized fiscal policy.

29. The participants in the 29 January special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board assessed progress made in the fulfilment of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework commitments and initiated a forward-looking agenda in anticipation of a ministerial development conference on Afghanistan to be held later in 2014. UNAMA facilitated civil society engagement with the process, as well as discussions between the Government and the international community on the preparation of a joint report on progress made in terms of hard deliverables. To encourage continuity of the Afghan economic and development agendas during the political transition, the 11 presidential candidates were invited to attend the meeting as observers. International representatives reaffirmed their long-term commitment to Afghanistan while linking this to continued momentum on good governance and a rights-based agenda, in particular protection of the gains made in the areas of human rights and women's rights. Accelerated economic and development progress, including the meeting of key anti-corruption commitments and International Monetary Fund benchmarks, together with efforts to address the illicit economy, were stressed as critical to Afghanistan's greater self-reliance. The Government reassured international partners of its commitment to the electoral timetable and, in turn, sought improvements in donor accountability and commitment to its aid management policy. Nearly all presidential candidates pledged to continue the progress made under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

30. The World Bank provided an overview of Afghanistan's current economic outlook. Afghanistan remains extraordinarily aid-dependent. After a bumper agricultural harvest in 2012, growth slowed to an estimated 3.1 per cent in 2013, with revenue collection weakening to 9.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The latter is understood to be due both to the economic slowdown and to continued weakness in enforcement. Economic uncertainty is also seen, for the first time, in the 43 per cent decline in the number of newly registered firms in the first seven months of 2013. Formidable challenges remain in the areas of poverty reduction, job creation and service delivery. Per capita GDP remains the lowest in Asia and among the bottom 20 in the world, literacy levels stand at approximately 25 per cent, and there is the pressure of some 400,000 new entrants to the labour market every year. On 19 January, in a bid to increase the country's skilled workforce, the Ministries of Education and of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, together with the United Nations, launched Afghanistan's first technical and vocational education and training strategy, aimed at building the necessary human resources for the country.

31. The Mission's rule-of-law efforts are increasingly focused on land disputes and management. In January, at the request of the Afghanistan Land Authority, UNAMA began co-chairing a land management working group. The group brings

together international donors and implementers of land reform and land-related programmes, advocating workable solutions to protracted disputes that have contributed to displacement in many parts of the country.

V. Humanitarian assistance

32. On 16 December, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, launched the global humanitarian plans for 2014, including a funding request of $406 million for Afghanistan. The Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Afghanistan estimates that 5.4 million people will require access to health services this year, including emergency trauma care, which is a top priority, given needs that currently dramatically exceed response capacity. The Plan also prioritizes the provision of assistance to 2.2 million people assessed as very severely food insecure. The third group identified as having acute unmet needs are internally displaced persons.

33. In 2013, 124,000 persons were recorded as newly displaced as a result of conflict, reflecting a 25 per cent increase compared with 2012. This brought the cumulative total of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan recorded by the United Nations to more than 630,000, from 20 of the 34 provinces. Helmand, Maidan Wardak, Faryab and Nangarhar Provinces recorded the highest levels of displacement, reflecting increased ground engagements. Moreover, continuing drought in the western region contributed to the displacement of some 1,000 families at the end of 2013, many initially to Chaghcharan, in Ghor Province, and then to Herat. Between mid-December 2013 and mid-February 2014, winter assistance was provided to vulnerable populations, including 35,000 internally displaced persons, in Wardak, Nuristan, Ghor, Ghazni, Paktya and Faryab Provinces and to another 30,000 people in informal settlements in and around Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat. On 11 February, the Government of Afghanistan, with United Nations support, launched the national policy on internal displacement. It set forth the roles and responsibilities of various Government ministries and agencies and their development and humanitarian partners, including the United Nations. An implementation strategy is now to be developed. The return of refugees to Afghanistan declined by 59 per cent in 2013 compared with 2012, with 38,766 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriating.

34. Vaccination campaigns continued to work towards the elimination of polio in Afghanistan, one of the last remaining countries reporting the disease. In 2013, there were 14 reported cases down from 37 in 2012 and 80 in 2011. Since mid-December, three campaigns have been conducted in the 41 districts at highest risk, resulting in the vaccination of more than 2.7 million children under 5 years of age. One of these was conducted in Kabul, where a child was confirmed to have contracted the disease in early February, the first case to have been recorded in the capital since the fall of the Taliban regime. The polio programme has enjoyed access to otherwise inaccessible areas.

35. Between January and December 2013, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs registered 283 security incidents, involving humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets across 33 provinces. These had a combination of deliberate and accidental impacts, resulting in the deaths of 38 personnel, 29 arrests and detentions of staff, 50 staff injuries and 84 staff abductions. This included the

brief abduction on 21 January of 67 deminers in Herat, the largest number of personnel involved in a single incident in recent years.

36. On 22 January, the Common Humanitarian Fund was formally established with more than $30 million committed by donors by mid-February. This fund channels unearmarked contributions towards needs-based assistance, with priority given to the most critical needs identified in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan.

VI. Counter-narcotics

37. On 6 and 23 December, the counter-narcotics police of Afghanistan seized 64 kilograms of heroin and nearly one metric ton of opium in Kabul. The intercepts were a result of Afghan intelligence-led operations that increased tenfold in 2013 compared with 2012. On 20 January, the counter-narcotics police identified and dismantled a methamphetamine laboratory in Herat Province, the third of its kind to have been identified in Afghanistan in the past year. Seizures of synthetic drugs rose from 8 in 2010 to 54 in 2013.

38. Led by the Governor of Badakhshan, a new counter-narcotics committee for the border district of Eshkashem met between 31 December and 4 January, bringing together government officials, development organizations, civil society and religious scholars. It was established in a follow-up to last year's Afghanistan-Tajikistan cross-border ministerial conference on drug control and livelihoods, facilitated by the United Nations, which was aimed at better linking the communities in Badakhshan, Afghanistan, to those of Tajikistan's autonomous province of Gorno-Badakhshan and Khatlon Province. The establishment of similar groups is progressing on the other side of the border, with the ultimate goal of joint committees to facilitate trade and build trust between cross-border communities.

39. On 17 January, the new Minister of Counter-Narcotics met with the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Yury Fedotov, in Vienna and emphasized that, without increased commitment by the international community, it would be difficult to achieve lasting success. On 28 and 29 January, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics organized a Good-Neighbourly Relations Declaratic. conference in Kabul. Ministers and representatives of counter-narcotics institutions in China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated. Greater exchange of information and improved joint simultaneous border operations were encouraged. On 10 February, the Minister of the Interior held a donors' conference on counter-narcotics in Kabul. Counter-narcotics is one of the Minister's top three priorities, and he urged the international community to continue to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies in that area.

VII. Mission support

40. Following the closure of 10 of its field offices over the past 18 months, UNAMA maintains a permanent field presence in 13 provinces. Consolidated field offices continue to provide a unique national platform for mandated outreach and monitoring activities. Despite security challenges, field offices engage on a daily basis with communities and officials at the provincial and district levels, including

in areas where the Mission does not have a permanent presence. Significant efforts are being made to maximize the use of the Mission's reduced fleet of armoured vehicles and to maintain — and even, in some cases, increase — the number of road missions undertaken. UNAMA also provided support for more than 40 visits outside Kabul carried out by the diplomatic community in 2013. The closure of provincial reconstruction teams and other international military bases across the country has had an impact on the level of logistical support available to United Nations field personnel, including through decreased maintenance of a number of regional airfields. In addition, staff members no longer have access to the level of medical care or safe havens previously available to them in the event of emergencies.

41. Following a reduction of 243 posts in 2013, UNAMA currently has 1,515 personnel (with a 6 per cent vacancy rate), comprising 345 international and 1,170 national staff. In addition, there are 71 United Nations Volunteers, 16 military advisers and three police advisers. On 11 January, UNAMA participated in the first meeting of the steering committee of the Kuwait Joint Support Office to further clarify governance, management and resource allocation issues. The enterprise resource planning project, Umoja, was launched in the Mission on 1 March, following months of preparations.

VIII. Observations

42. A legitimate political transition is the foundation for stability in Afghanistan. Next month's landmark elections will mark the first transfer of power in Afghanistan from one elected president to another. Efforts remain on track for presidential and provincial council elections to be held on 5 April in accordance with Afghanistan's legal and constitutional framework. These polls will not be without flaws; however, if credibly conducted, with a result that is widely accepted, they will provide a mandate for a new leadership to address the country's many challenges in ways that strengthen stability and reinforce national unity.

43. Afghanistan's electoral management bodies are in the lead, and the efforts of the Independent Election Commission have ensured smooth progress, with technical arrangements more advanced than those for any previous poll. The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission has faced a major challenge in working to strengthen institutional capacity, including a presence in each of the country's 34 provinces, while carrying out its substantial responsibilities at the same time. Its role in transparently and impartially adjudicating electoral complaints will be critical. Observation will be another important element in building trust in the electoral process, and I encourage domestic observers, as well as candidates and party agents, to ensure wide geographic coverage. I welcome those international organizations that will field observer missions. While the United Nations does not have a role in the administration or adjudication of these elections, it will, in line with its mandate and at the request of Afghan authorities, continue to provide technical assistance to and facilitate coherence in international support for the process.

44. My Special Representative continues to meet with all stakeholders in support of the inclusiveness and integrity of the process. Efforts among contenders to build mutual understandings, while they must not replace the people's voice at the ballot box, are welcome in guarding against a "winner-takes-all" scenario. I welcome

what, to date, has been a robust but respectful campaign. Candidates as well as electoral authorities hold enormous responsibility in helping to ensure that the electoral process promotes stability and national unity. I urge candidates and their supporters to comply with electoral laws and to pursue complaints through mandated institutions.

45. Come 5 April, I encourage all eligible Afghan citizens to make their voice count in the country's future. The participation of women — not only as voters, but also as candidates, electoral workers and observers — will be a key measure of the representativeness of these elections. State institutions and security forces must remain impartial, and I welcome President Karzai's clear instructions in this regard. Media freedom and balanced coverage are equally essential to a fair contest. Security will be critical in ensuring that voters have the confidence to turn out, and the very real challenges in this regard should not be underestimated. Afghan security institutions are in the lead, and the Ministry of the Interior, together with national and international partners, has been proactive in security planning to support a maximum franchise. Elections are the exercise by citizens of their rights, and I call on all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations in this regard.

46. Afghanistan faces a complex conflict, with a nexus of armed groups and organized criminal networks pursuing simultaneous and sometimes competing local, national and transnational agendas. A peace process or even direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and major armed opposition elements are unlikely before the elections. The widespread desire for peace, however, is clear from the discourse of the election campaigns, as well as from the positions of diverse Afghan religious, tribal and civil society groups. It is essential that efforts continue to put in place arrangements to, in the short term, prevent and mitigate the ever-increasing toll that the violence is taking on civilians. Continuing engagement should also assist a new Government's efforts to move swiftly in initiating the first steps towards longer-term solutions. Times of uncertainty can heighten community rivalries and feelings of marginalization, which can be exploited by insurgents. The Mission's community-level dialogue and confidence-building, including a recent focus on ulema's contribution to peace, is a low-profile but important contribution. The good offices of the United Nations in support of Afghan-led reconciliation will remain at the disposal of a future Government.

47. Afghanistan's place in the region will be vital to long-term stability and sustainability as the presence of the wider international community draws down. I continue to be encouraged by the increased recognition of shared mutual interests by Afghanistan and Pakistan, which I hope will further expand and extend to concrete actions in support of peace and stability, underscored by economic cooperation. Growing regional engagement through complementary bilateral, regional and multilateral forums is welcome. The shared nature of the challenges — and opportunities — that Afghanistan presents to the security and stability of the entire region appears widely understood as regional forums, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, turn their attention to support for Afghan solutions. The Istanbul Process is distinct in that Afghanistan is at the heart of the mechanism. Increasingly, substantive dialogue is emerging in this forum on regional stability and energy security measures, and the United Nations will continue to provide support to regional confidence-building efforts. I hope that preparations for the ministerial-level meeting to be held in Tianjin, China, in August will provide the opportunity to

pursue practical results, and I welcome China's active role as host and promoter of regional cooperation.

48. Elections, as in any country, currently consume much of the political space. The economic sustainability of Afghanistan, however, remains pressing and cannot be ignored. The special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board held on 29 January reinforced the importance of continuity in progress on mutual commitments made in Tokyo, including addressing the reform, good governance and human rights agenda, as well as the growing fiscal gap between government revenue and expenditure through robust efforts to increase revenue. An appropriate regulatory framework is another key component of confidence, notably progress on the adoption of anti-money-laundering, counter-terrorism financing and mining legislation, all of which are commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. In this environment, any rapid decline in the exceptional levels of aid provided to Afghanistan carries grave risk, and predictability on the part of the international community in meeting financial commitments made in Tokyo and Chicago in the coming years will be equally essential. I welcome the recognition by Afghanistan's presidential candidates of the need to maintain momentum on mutual reform commitments and, in particular, the need for greater attention with regard to a broad-based, inclusive and sustainable development and poverty reduction agenda. The emphasis of candidates on job creation for Afghanistan's burgeoning youth population is equally important. Given that Afghanistan's economic sustainability is at stake, preparations for the ministerial development conference planned for later in the year must not be business as usual. There is a need for a prioritized and sustained approach to Afghanistan's development, and the United Nations will continue to assist with the coordination of international aid in support thereof.

49. A key focus in the preparations for the ministerial meeting must be efforts to strengthen the licit economy and undercut the burgeoning illicit economy. Opium production in Afghanistan hit a new high in 2013, with the supply of and demand for narcotics threatening the health and well-being of the population, the economy and the institutional fabric of the country and the region. As other sectors contract, and as insurgents rely increasingly on funding from the drug trade, there is a real risk of the emergence of a narco-State. Comprehensive approaches to tackling this scourge are a shared responsibility requiring robust political will on the part of Afghanistan, the region and the wider international community.

50. The progress that Afghanistan has made in protecting and promoting human rights since 2001 has been an important contributor to stability, however fragile. Amid the uncertainty of transition, many Afghans, particularly women, fear that human rights achievements risk being forfeited for the sake of short-term political expediency. Greater commitment to the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women remains a critical government responsibility, with prosecutions and convictions under this landmark legislation remaining low. I welcome the Government's first report on progress on the implementation of the law. Another noteworthy development is the commitment of the Minister of the Interior to increasing the number of female police officers and to ensuring adequate support for them. I welcome the endorsement by President Karzai of the criminal procedure code — the culmination of many years of work — as well as his intervention to ensure that perpetrators of violence, particularly against women, are held accountable. Steps such as these will contribute to confidence, domestic and international, in Afghanistan's future. In this regard, I call on Afghan authorities to

take all necessary measures to support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in fulfilling its critical role as an effective and independent institution. Supporting Afghan efforts to strengthen human rights and the rule of law will remain a priority for the United Nations. Across the United Nations system, those elements and agencies engaged in support for the rule of law are increasingly working together to streamline and strengthen efforts.

51. Afghanistan remains in the bottom decile of the world's least developed countries. Humanitarian needs are foreseen to rise, including through civilian casualties and the displacement of conflict-affected populations. In this context, the coordination of humanitarian assistance will continue to be a core component of the work of the United Nations in Afghanistan. The 2014 Common Humanitarian Action Plan reflects a more targeted approach to meeting the most acute needs, and I call upon donors to maintain their commitments. The abduction of 67 mine clearance workers serves as another reminder of the dangerous operating environment. There is no evidence that humanitarian workers are being systematically targeted; however, the nature of their work means that needs are often greatest where risks are highest. The access of vaccination workers has been facilitated by local leaders, and this must be sustained if the global goal of the eradication of polio by 2018 is to be achieved.

52. Uncertainty dominates Afghanistan's final year of transition and has an impact on political, security, economic and social developments. The international presence will be dramatically reduced, and Afghanistan's future leadership is not yet decided upon. In this context, it is critical that predictability and confidence, where feasible, be reinforced. The United Nations has been a force for continuity in Afghanistan for decades. Its countrywide presence and its good offices, human rights, coordination of international aid and humanitarian assistance functions will remain important. The precise ways in which the Organization can best support Afghanistan and its people will necessarily evolve to reflect changing circumstances. When there is greater clarity regarding the political, security and economic impacts of Afghanistan's final transition year, that will be the time to address, together with the Government of Afghanistan, the role of the United Nations in greater depth. I would thus request the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNAMA, due to expire on 19 March, for a further 12 months. In so doing, I reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to a sustained partnership with Afghanistan. I also call upon Member States to continue to provide the resources required to maintain our engagement and activities across the country.

53. I again pay tribute to the lives and dedicated service of our four fallen comrades and express my deep condolences to the families they leave behind. The 17 January attack reminded us once again of the dangers faced by United Nations national and international staff members. The targeting of a civilian location breaks every established law and norm of war, and I reiterate my strongest condemnation of such acts. All parties to the conflict must fulfil their obligations with respect to the protection of civilians. I thank all personnel in Afghanistan, under the leadership of my Special Representative, Ján Kubiš, for their continued commitment in support of the people of Afghanistan.

Annex

Progress achieved against benchmarks

I. Security

Benchmark: sustainable Afghan security institutions and processes capable of ensuring peace and stability and protecting the people of Afghanistan

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Increase in the number of national police and national army personnel mentored, trained and operational according to an agreed structure	• As of mid-January, the personnel of the Afghan National Army numbered 193,427, including 7,300 military personnel serving in the Afghan Air Force. As of the end of 2013, the Afghan National Police had 145,199 personnel • On 8 April 2013, the Ministry of the Interior issued its 10-year vision for the Afghan National Police and the Ministry, outlining plans for civilian policing, community engagement and the recruitment of women police. In January 2014, the Ministry also issued its strategy for the management of women police, to provide guidance on their protection. Both initiatives reflected technical advice from the international community and UNAMA
Development of and progress in a plan for a phased and conditions-based transition to an Afghan security lead	• The President approved the fifth and final tranche of the transition on 18 June 2013

II. Peace, reintegration and reconciliation

Benchmark: national dialogue and regional engagement to pursue constructive and inclusive processes to foster a political environment conducive to peace

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Development and implementation of inclusive national and regional processes to enhance peace, reintegration and reconciliation efforts	• At the end of December 2013, a total of 7,796 anti-government elements were enrolled in the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme, including 693 commanders/leaders. Since the beginning of the programme, 164 small grants projects have been approved in 25 provinces, benefiting communities through the development of infrastructure and providing short-term employment opportunities for community members and reintegrees

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• To support the Government's efforts to stabilize key areas, the United Nations-supported National Area-Based Development Programme continued in 2013, with 22 projects completed in 10 provinces. These projects benefited 94,182 people, including by providing ex-combatants with alternative economic opportunities
	• From 8 to 11 January 2013, President Karzai, accompanied by the Chair of the High Peace Council, visited Washington, D.C., and discussed with the President of the United States of America and other officials the furtherance of the peace process
	• Participants in the third International Conference for Islamic Cooperation for a Peaceful Future in Afghanistan, held in Istanbul on 4 and 5 March 2013, called for the settlement of differences through dialogue and negotiations. The follow-up conference, held in Kabul on 8 April 2013, explored practical measures to implement what had been endorsed in Istanbul. The religious scholars participating in the Conference denounced suicide attacks as un-Islamic
	• On 18 June 2013, the Taliban issued a statement indicating its willingness to pursue a political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. An office for talks was opened in Doha, in the presence of designated Taliban officials and the Qatari authorities. The Taliban's use of the name and symbols of its former regime at the opening ceremony triggered a strongly negative reaction from the Government of Afghanistan and wider Afghan society. On 19 June, the Government declared that dialogue would be postponed pending guarantees that the process would be fully Afghan-led. Subsequently, the office was temporarily closed
	• In response to a request made by President Karzai during an official visit to Pakistan on 26 and 27 August 2013, seven Taliban prisoners were released on 7 September 2013, and Mullah Baradar was released on 21 September 2013

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• A High Peace Council delegation travelled to Islamabad from 19 to 21 November 2013, where they met with the Prime Minister and other Government officials to work on previously agreed initiatives. During a visit to Kabul on 30 November 2013, the Prime Minister of Pakistan renewed commitments to the facilitation of talks with the Taliban
	• In 2013, UNAMA organized four mediation skills training courses for 73 prominent Afghan stakeholders in four provinces and supported seven local peace initiatives, which resulted in 21 local dialogue events held in nine provinces. Those initiatives produced five declarations or interim agreements in support of reconciliation or confidence-building measures between communities
	• The development of the national action plan for Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to enhance women's role in conflict prevention and participation in the peace process continued, with United Nations technical and financial assistance being provided to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Increased ability by Afghan authorities to gather and provide substantiated, updated and accurate information to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)	• In 2013, the Government of Afghanistan provided substantiated, updated and accurate information to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), including an annual report on the status of reportedly reconciled individuals who had been delisted in the course of 2012
	• On 16 April, the Committee approved the listing of an individual for manufacturing improvised explosive devices for the Taliban and for constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan
Increased public support for the peace process through engagement at the community level and with civil society	• In 2013, 1 provincial peace committee was established, bringing the total of such committees to 33. The number of provincial joint secretariat teams implementing the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme increased to 33

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• The first meeting between the High Peace Council and political parties was held on 16 April 2013, to discuss ways to achieve unity among various layers of Afghan society in support of the peace process. A similar meeting was held on 2 May 2013 with the Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions of Afghanistan
	• In April and May 2013, the High Peace Council held meetings with Afghan civil society representatives to establish a forum to address the concerns of civil society groups and promote inclusivity in national peace dialogues
	• On 4 July 2013, the High Peace Council participated in a conference, entitled "Discussing the Social Peace Strategy", organized by a forum of civil society groups. It was agreed that the Council's joint secretariat and the forum would jointly establish a mechanism for the implementation of the strategy
	• A joint High Peace Council and ulema conference was held in Kabul on 4 August 2013 to discuss ways to expand outreach through mosques and religious centres to promote peace and tolerance
	• During Peace Week, in September 2013, the High Peace Council organized a regional conference on the role of women in the peace process, in Jalalabad; an international ulema conference on Islam, peace and tolerance, in Kabul; and a High Peace Council and civil society joint gathering, in Kabul. In addition, some 120 outreach events, attended by more than 25,000 people, were held throughout the country to promote peace and reconciliation

III. Governance and institution-building

Benchmark: extension of Government authority throughout the country through the establishment of democratic, legitimate, accountable institutions, down to the local level, with the capacity to implement policies and to be increasingly capable of sustaining themselves

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Increased ability by Afghan authorities and independent electoral institutions to manage and conduct genuine and periodic elections, with due regard to women's participation and constitutionally guaranteed quotas	• The National Assembly ratified the legal framework for future elections, comprising the electoral law and the law on the structures, duties and authorities of the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission. The laws were endorsed by the President in July 2013. The new legislation reduced the quota for women in provincial councils from 25 per cent to 20 per cent • The voter registration update commenced on 26 May 2013, and, as at 14 February 2014, a total of 3,507,682 voter cards (34.6 per cent to female voters) had been issued to those who had reached 18 years of age, lost their voter cards or moved since the holding of the previous polls • Afghan national security forces expressed confidence in the securing of nearly 94 per cent of the 7,168 polling centres proposed by the Commission for the 2014 elections. On 19 February, the Independent Election Commission announced its list of 6,775 polling centres for election day, expressing similar levels of confidence • On 31 July, the nine Commissioners for the Independent Election Commission were formally appointed. The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission was established on 15 September, followed by the appointment of its five Commissioners and the authorization of the Commissions' initial budgets on 23 September. The Commissioners for both electoral bodies were appointed on the basis of a formal consultative process mandated in the electoral legislation. The Independent Election Commission completed its operational plan, which provides a detailed overview of the processes that ensure that all necessary activities are identified and sequenced and that those activities meet all deadlines set out in the

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	elections law, regulations, procedures and guidelines
Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation committee and development of anti-corruption benchmarks	• On 28 September 2013, the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee released its fourth six-month report, covering January to June 2013. In the report, the Committee noted that progress had been made but that further efforts were needed, including the recovery of Kabul Bank assets. The Committee added 36 new recommendations to its existing list of 74
	• On 21 October 2013, the Committee called on the National Assembly to improve the mineral law to better protect the mining sector against corruption. Legislators incorporated the Committee's recommendations into the draft law on increasing transparency and accountability in the sector
	• On 27 January 2014, the Committee released five reports identifying significant vulnerabilities to corruption in various sectors of government, including the distribution of land to repatriates, pension payments and appointments to the civil service
Empowerment of anti-corruption institutions to oversee a whole-of-government approach to anti-corruption	• In the first quarter of 2013, the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption established an anti-corruption committee within each ministry to enhance coherence and greater outreach in the implementation of the Government's anti-corruption policies. Each committee receives technical support and training from the Office
	• In September 2013, the National Assembly approved the national audit law, mandating the Supreme Audit Office to undertake audits of government institutions
	• On 9 December 2013, the Government launched the Afghanistan Integrity Initiative, a United Nations-backed anti-corruption project. The initiative is aimed at strengthening the capacity of administrative systems to tackle corruption and will be implemented by the Ministries of Education and Justice together with the Supreme Audit Office and citizens' groups

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Annual publication of asset declarations of public officials	• The Government's High Office of Oversight registered the assets of 2,975 government officials during the reporting period. The Office has published information on the "asset registration" of 44 senior government officials, and asset verification has been completed for 33 high-level government officials, including the President, Vice-Presidents, ministers and governors. The verification of the asset declarations of an additional 32 senior officials is under way
Increased capacity of civil servants at the central, provincial and district levels to discharge functions and deliver services	• In 2013, the Civil Service Training Institute delivered training on management, computer skills, English-language proficiency, planning and finance/accounting to 5,150 civil servants
	• In 2013, the Independent Directorate for Local Governance trained staff of 7 provincial government offices, 29 district government offices and 8 municipality offices on planning and reporting, budgeting and human resources management. The Directorate also established resource centres in Bamyan and Jawzjan provinces to provide public information on the status of the administration
Increased transparency and effectiveness of civil service appointments	• Merit-based recruitment of district governors continued, with 49 new district governors appointed in 2013. This brought the total number of district governors recruited through this process to 231. The overall total of deputy provincial governors recruited under this system has remained 32 since January 2013
Strengthened civil service reform supported by a comprehensive approach to capacity-building and donor-funded technical assistance	• In 2013, five proposals were submitted by the Ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; Public Health; Communication and Technology; Commerce; and Rural Reconstruction and Development to the Capacity-building for Results Programme managed by the World Bank. The proposal from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock has been approved by the programme's advisory group and is currently being finalized by its steering committee in advance of implementation and the disbursement of funding

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• The United Nations and the World Bank committed to the progressive alignment of salaries for 6,000 to 7,000 government staff currently paid through their funds, with an agreed government scale for national technical assistance
Implementation of the subnational governance policy and development of subnational regulatory, financing and budgetary frameworks	• The municipality law is under review by the Cabinet. Pending its finalization, the Independent Directorate for Local Governance led the development of municipal action plans to improve revenue generation
	• The national policy for governance and development at the district and village levels was approved by the Cabinet on 30 December 2013. The amended provincial council law was adopted by the lower house of the National Assembly on 4 January 2014. The local government law was endorsed by the Cabinet and is awaiting the approval of the National Assembly
	• In 2013, authorities in all 34 provinces completed one-year provincial development plans
Development and publication of criteria for administrative boundaries	• National and international institutions continue to use the 2009 internal boundary data set as stipulated by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance and the Geodesy and Cartography Head Office
Establishment of adequate infrastructure for functioning government institutions, especially at the subnational level	• The Independent Directorate of Local Governance completed the construction of 4 provincial and 11 district administrative buildings and 6 provincial residential buildings
Establishment of credible and accessible judicial and penal systems that respect and uphold the human rights of all citizens	• On 23 February 2014, the President signed the criminal procedure code as approved by both houses of the National Assembly
	• In January 2014, the criminal law reform working group, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, finalized 220 articles of the draft penal code. The current penal code is being revised to incorporate all criminal laws enacted since 2001, including counter-terrorism, anti-corruption, anti-money-laundering and anti-human-trafficking laws

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• In 2013, the Director-General of the Central Prisons Directorate signed 114 operational prison directives to improve the implementation of prison management and administration, as well as promoting human rights regulations
	• The national priority programme entitled "Law and Justice for All" was endorsed at the meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board on 29 June 2013
	• The Ministry of Justice increased the number of legal aid offices to 31 in 2013. The offices are staffed by 101 legal aid lawyers, an increase compared with 84 in 2012. An additional 42 lawyers are provided through the Justice Sector Development Programme of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
	• In 2013, the provision of legal aid services by non-governmental organizations decreased, with the number of lawyers declining to an estimated 208 from 236 in 2012
	• The number of lawyers registered with the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association increased from 1,500 in December 2012 to approximately 2,000 in December 2013
	• Following the formal transfer of the Central Prisons Directorate to the Ministry of the Interior in 2012, the pay review process for the Directorate was completed on 23 October 2013, to achieve parity in salary with the police and improve staff retention
	• The Central Prisons Directorate, in liaison with other national and international stakeholders, developed the Ministry of the Interior's 10-year vision for the Directorate, which was launched on 30 June 2013. The Ministry, with United Nations support, provided coordination and technical assistance in the development of a series of progressive two-year strategic plans that support the implementation of the vision
	• In response to a 33 per cent increase in the prison population since 2012, three new prisons for men and two for women became operational in 2013, along with three juvenile rehabilitation centres

IV. Human rights

Benchmark: improved respect for the human rights of Afghans, in line with the Afghan Constitution and international law, with particular emphasis on the protection of civilians, the situation of women and girls, freedom of expression and accountability based on the rule of law

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Reduction in the number of incidents of unlawful use of force and intimidation of civilians, through compliance by relevant actors with international law	• In 2013, conflict-related violence killed 2,959 civilians and injured 5,656, a 14 percent increase in total civilian casualties compared with 2012. Anti-government elements were responsible for 2,311 civilian deaths and 4,063 injuries, an increase of 4 per cent compared with 2012. Pro-government forces were responsible for 341 civilian deaths and 615 injuries, a 59 per cent increase compared with 2012. Unattributed ground engagements between anti-government elements and pro-government forces resulted in 160 civilian deaths and 720 injuries, a 64 per cent increase compared with 2012 • In 2013, the United Nations-led Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on Children and Armed Conflict documented 1,694 child casualties. A total of 545 children were killed and 1,149 children were injured, an overall increase of 42 per cent compared with 2012 • The Government continued the tracking of civilian casualties through the civilian casualties tracking cell in the Presidential Information Coordination Centre • To reduce civilian casualties from explosive remnants of war, in December 2013 the International Security Assistance Force established procedures to support the marking and clearance of military installations, including firing ranges • In 2013, the Taliban reported, in its regular monthly statements, 277 incidents of civilian casualties resulting from operations of pro-government forces. UNAMA was able to verify 174 of these incidents through its reporting on conflict-related violence

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• The United Nations continued extensive monitoring and advocacy efforts to strengthen compliance with international law and UNAMA recorded a 39 per cent decrease in civilian casualties from pressure-plated improvised explosive devices in 2013
Improved awareness by Afghans of their rights and by the Government of its obligations	• Following the issuance of presidential decree No. 169 to address allegations of the torture and ill-treatment of conflict-related detainees, the Ministry of the Interior, the National Directorate of Security and the Attorney-General's Office strengthened the training of their personnel, including the introduction of human rights modules at both the Directorate and Afghan National Police academies
	• In 2013, UNAMA published four public reports: two on the protection of civilians, one on the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and one on the treatment of conflict-related detainees in Afghan custody. In conjunction with the reports, UNAMA carried out advocacy activities with various stakeholders and the media to raise awareness among the Afghan population
	• The Government continued efforts to implement the action plan to protect children from the impact of the conflict and to prevent underage recruitment by armed forces. In May 2013, the United Nations submitted an official response to the Government's annual progress report and assisted in the development of a 15-point plan to expedite the implementation of the action plan by the Government
	• On 3 October 2013, the United Nations and UNAMA organized the "Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security", under the aegis of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The event was focused on the theme "Political participation is everyone's right: women as voters and candidates"

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Improved impact of, and support for, legal and policy measures to combat violence against women and girls	• In 2013, both the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA issued reports that addressed the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women. The reports noted progress and continuing gaps in the enforcement of the law by police, prosecutors and courts. The implementation of the law was discussed at the special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board held in January 2014 • Commissions for the elimination of violence against women have been established in 32 provinces, in accordance with the provisions of the law on the elimination of violence against women, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs worked with local authorities in 11 provinces to improve the implementation of the law, with United Nations technical support • Beginning on 25 November 2013, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, an initiative to raise awareness on ending violence against women, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled conducted, with United Nations support, a nationwide campaign on early and child marriage • A coordinated multisectoral response to gender-based violence continued to be developed in 2013. The integration of professional assistance and referral services into the health sector has been initiated by the Ministry of Public Health, with support from the United Nations Population Fund
Improved awareness of, and support for, legal and policy measures related to combating impunity and furthering transitional justice	• In February 2013, civil society groups, supported by UNAMA, launched the second phase of the Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace, which is aimed at supporting inclusive dialogue to produce local road maps for peace. By the end of 2013, the process had facilitated 187 focus group discussions with 4,572 people representing a broad social spectrum • On 24 July 2013, the women's committee of the High Peace Council held a conference for gender focal points from all ministries and directorates to discuss women's political participation and their role in promoting the peace process

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• In December 2013, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) released a report, entitled "Like a bird with broken wings: Afghan Women Oral History, 1978-2008", on its Afghan Women Oral History initiative, covering 30 years of conflict. The testimonies of Afghan women contained in the report aim to provide a "voice to those denied a place in official history" and share their personal experiences, whether as victims or witnesses, to contribute to reconciliation and change
Government fulfilment of reporting requirements on international human rights covenants and conventions and implementation of the recommendations from the Human Rights Council universal periodic review of Afghanistan	• In December 2012, the Government of Afghanistan, with United Nations support, successfully requested a 10-year extension of the time frame for meeting its obligations under article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The implementation of a 10-year action plan commenced in April 2013 to remove all known remaining landmine contamination by 2023
	• On 10 July 2013, Afghanistan presented its combined initial and second periodic reports on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Government and civil society delegations, with United Nations support, presented their findings and responded to the queries of the Convention's Committee
	• In November 2013, the Government submitted its second report to the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. The report addressed the Government's progress in implementing the 117 recommendations made by the Council in 2009
	• In December 2013, the Ministry of Justice, with United Nations support, conducted consultations with government ministries and institutions to prioritize the implementation of its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Increased capacity and commitment of the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, as the Afghan national human rights institution, to respect, protect, fulfil and promote human rights	• Following the five-year review of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions on 18 November 2013, the Subcommittee on Accreditation decided to defer the re-accreditation of the Co mission until the Committee's second session of 2014 to allow the Commission to address concerns raised regarding its appointment processes, gender staffing ratio and financing • In 2013, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission published reports on violence against women, the situation of children, rape and honour killing, citizens' access to justice and the conditions of the elderly in Afghanistan • In 2013, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, with United Nations support, continued to enhance its efforts to monitor and address child rights violations. Following training for the Child Rights Unit undertaken in the first half of 20 3, the number of child rights violations recorded by the Commission rose from 21 in the second quarter of 2013 to more than 200 by the end of 2013

V. Economic and social development

Benchmark: government policies supported by the international community that promote sustainable economic growth and contribute to overall stability

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
National priority programmes are designed and implemented with international support and endorsement	• In June 2013, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board endorsed the national priority programme entitled "Law and Justice for All", bringing the number of endorsed national priority programmes to 21, out of a total of 22 programmes • On 3 July 2013, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework senior officials' meeting was held in Kabul. It was noted that both the Government and the international community had made progress in meeting their commitments, but that greater efforts were

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	needed on outstanding issues, including aid effectiveness, human rights, integrity in public finance and inclusive growth
	• Following these two events, the Government established a national priority programme implementation technical working group. The group is currently reviewing five national priority programmes to ascertain best practices on financial modalities to apply to the implementation of the other programmes
More equitable distribution of development assistance and Government expenditure throughout Afghanistan	• The Ministry of Finance has developed a provincial budgeting policy. The policy, now before the Cabinet for review, is aimed at balancing the role of the central Government while strengthening the ability of provincial and district authorities to improve direct service delivery
	• As at 11 February 2014, a total of 23 provinces were participating in the ongoing pilot provincial budgeting programme, led by the Ministry of Finance. The programme provides allocations of $3 million to the most underdeveloped provinces and $1 million to more developed ones. It is focused on the development of local capacity to plan for urgent development needs, particularly in areas that have seen the closure of provincial reconstruction teams
Increased revenue collection and sustainable growth based on Afghan resources	• The World Bank's January 2014 *Global Economic Prospects* report shows a slowdown of Afghanistan's growth in gross domestic product from 14.4 per cent in 2012 to 3.1 per cent in 2013. The slower economic growth is expected to continue in the first half of 2014. As a result, revenue collection is estimated to have declined from 10.3 per cent of gross domestic product in 2012 to 9.6 per cent in 2013, according to a World Bank presentation made at the special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board held in January 2014

VI. Regional cooperation

Benchmark: sustained and effective regional coordination in support of prosperity, peace and stability

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Improved coordination of regional bodies and increased regional investments	• On 20 March in Ashgabat, the Presidents of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of railroads linking the three countries • On 29 March, participants in the eleventh ministerial meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, held in Dushanbe, discussed ways to enhance regional connectivity to promote trade, investment, transit and people-to-people contacts • On 26 April in Almaty, participants in the third ministerial conference on the Istanbul Process adopted implementation plans for the six confidence-building measures. The declaration adopted at the conference stressed the political nature of the process but emphasized the need for demonstrable progress in agreed activities and called for interim, ad hoc funding by participants • On 9 July, progress was made on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, with a contract signed in Ashgabat between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan on the sale and purchase of gas • On 13 July in Kyrgyzstan, a meeting of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization reaffirmed support for Afghanistan as an independent, peaceful, neutral and prosperous State free from terrorism and drug-related crime. The central role of the United Nations in international efforts to support Afghanistan was also reaffirmed • On 4 August, President Karzai visited the Islamic Republic of Iran and a memorandum of understanding on strategic cooperation between the National Security Council of Afghanistan and the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran was signed

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• On 10 and 11 September, a delegation of the Pakistan Senate Standing Committee on Defence met with Afghan counterparts to review security issues and cooperation
	• On 12 and 13 September in Bishkek, President Karzai attended the thirteenth summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and committed to the further strengthening of relations with the organization
	• On 16 and 17 September in Islamabad, participants in the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Council on the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project adopted three resolutions establishing contract structures and procurement and finance committees
	• On 26 September, the seventh round of the Pakistan-Afghanistan parliamentary dialogue was held in Islamabad
	• On 21 October in Dushanbe, the Presidents of Afghanistan and Tajikistan signed an agreement on demining, border crossing protocols and insurance cooperation
	• On 30 October, Afghanistan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan signed a protocol on border cooperation
	• From 12 to 15 December, President Karzai carried out an official visit to India. During the visit, discussions were focused on enhancing the implementation of the two countries' strategic partnership agreement and regional integration and development, including through the "Heart of Asia" process
	• On 19 December, a parliamentary delegation from Pakistan visited Kabul. Parliamentarians from both sides suggested that Afghanistan and Pakistan sign a strategic cooperation partnership agreement

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• On 17 January 2014, India hosted the senior officials' meeting of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, held in New Delhi. Progress achieved in terms of the six agreed confidence-building measures and their proposed funding modalities was discussed

VII. Partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community

Benchmark: coherent support by the international community for Afghan priorities within an Afghan-led coordination framework

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Increased percentage of aid aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and Government priorities	• The Government issued two guidance notes to support the implementation of its aid management policy: one on alignment with the national priority programmes (in March 2013) and one on on-budget modalities (May 2013) • A task force led by the Ministry of Finance was established in 2013 to advocate and mobilize support for the implementation among the Government, the donor community, other multilateral partners, civil society and the private sector of the commitments set out in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The Ministry, together with the United Nations, is conducting a study to examine the five peacebuilding and State-building goals of the New Deal • In 2013, an on-budget modality for transferring funds within the Government to strengthen the financial management capacity of provincial and district-level support for the payment of salaries under the "Education for All" national priority programme was established with support from the United Nations as part of its programme for the enhancement of literacy

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Improved accountability of procurement and contracting on behalf of the Government and the international community	• In November 2013, the Government held a high-level national procurement conference to address public procurement-related impediments to budget execution, service delivery and the achievement of development outcomes. The conference concluded with a declaration on the public procurement law, outlining national and international stakeholders' affirmation of their responsibility to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability and fairness in public procurement
Strengthening of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in support of the Kabul Process and as a means of regular review of progress on Afghan priorities and mutual commitments	• Participants in the special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board held on 29 January 2014 assessed the progress made in the implementation of the deliverables of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and underscored the need to accelerate progress on key indicators, including anti-corruption measures, the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and the meeting of International Monetary Fund benchmarks

VIII. Counter-narcotics

Benchmark: sustained trend in the reduction of poppy cultivation, narcotics production and drug addiction

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
Decrease in poppy cultivation, narcotics production and addiction rates	• Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan increased in 2013, surpassing all previously recorded levels. The cultivation amounted to some 209,000 hectares, representing a 36 per cent increase compared with 2012. Opium production in 2013 rose to some 5,500 tons, a 49 per cent increase compared with 2012. The number of poppy-free provinces decreased from 17 in 2012 to 15 in 2013. The vast majority (89 per cent) of the total opium cultivation in 2013 was recorded in nine Provinces in Afghanistan's southern and western regions: Helmand, Kandahar, Farah, Uruzgan, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Badghis, Daykundi and Nimroz

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• There were no new data available in 2013 to indicate a decrease in addiction rates within the country. However, the Government has continued the implementation of the drug demand reduction strategy and the national strategic framework for HIV and advocated with the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the continuation and expansion of HIV prevention, treatment and care services
	• The provision of drug treatment services increased to cover approximately 32,000 individuals through 101 treatment services in 28 provinces. In 2013, the increase in services included the establishment and strengthening of harm-reduction services through 57 centres in 11 provinces. These initiatives in community and prison settings were focused on treatment services for vulnerable groups, including female drug users, spouses of male injecting users and adolescent drug users
Increase in effective interdiction and counter-trafficking efforts	• In 2013, the counter-narcotics police conducted 3,243 operations, seizing 7,157 kilograms of heroin, 23,979 kilograms of morphine, 115,650 kilograms of opium, 31,926 kilograms of hashish, 13,697 kilograms of cannabis and 11 kilograms of methamphetamine. In addition, 65,187 litres of liquid precursors and 45,806 kilograms of solid precursor materials were seized. The counter-narcotics police also assisted with the eradication of 7,348 hectares of opium poppy and dismantled 71 heroin manufacturing laboratories. These activities led to the arrest of 3,081 suspects, with 25 counter-narcotics police being killed and 74 wounded
	• The Regional Intelligence Working Group on Precursors continues to enhance regional cooperation in the fight against precursor trafficking. In 2013, five investigation cases of precursor chemicals, amounting to 141,055 litres, recommended by the Working Group were reviewed and backtracking investigations launched

Indicators of progress	*Metrics*
	• In 2013, seven coordination meetings within the framework of the Triangular Initiative and the Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Initiative resulted in agreement on a number of recommendations, including with respect to joint/simultaneous operations. Afghan law enforcement agencies carried out six joint operations with Tajikistan, resulting in the seizure of 430.4 kilograms of narcotic drugs
	• Under the Triangular Initiative, the Maritime Regional Security Initiative, aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, resulted in the seizure of more than 7 tons of narcotic drugs
Increase in licit agriculture and related private capital investment in areas previously used for poppy cultivation	• In 2013, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics played a key role in incorporating counter-narcotics objectives into the national priority programmes, including the development of a monitoring mechanism to measure the increase in licit agriculture and related private capital investment
	• In 2013, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics took steps to revise and enhance the national drug control strategy to develop thematic policies
	• Twelve small-scale livelihood projects managed by the Ministries of Counter-Narcotics and of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock together with the United Nations are being implemented in the northern and western provinces of Afghanistan to support an increase in licit agriculture, including a land stabilization project that benefits 6,372 families